

## Poverty Trap, Migration and Unsafe Destination

Proposed by

Associate Professor Amara Soonthorndhada  
Institute for Population and Social Research  
Mahidol University

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### **Session: Social reproduction and women migrant workers**

#### **Background**

It would be unrealistic to discuss the rapid growth of labour migration especially in the Southeast Asia sub-region, without mentioning the important migration stream of women especially young female migrants moving out from their homeland to work in the neighbouring countries. This paper describes the connection between regional socio-economic factors, gender relations on the vulnerability of women and girls to human trafficking for the explicit purpose of sexual exploitation, their related HIV/AIDS risks, and the impact of gender relations on female victims' access to HIV prevention, care and treatment, and other services. The findings are based on qualitative data of 24 cases of migrant workers from Lao PDR and Myanmar.

#### **Results**

The results revealed that the majority of cases became involved in sex sector at the age range of 15-19 and the main reason of entering Thailand was that they were lied to about what they would be doing. Most women found employment through agents who are their neighbours and friends who have been working in Thailand and temporarily return to their home countries. Due to poverty, limited employment opportunity in their hometown, low education, there is no doubt that they are exploited and at risk of HIV infection when lured into commercial sex business due to practicing unprotected sex.

#### **Conclusions**

This study recommended that to safeguard young women from being exploited, a multi-national coordination to mobilise public concerns and law enforcement should be a priority. While planning for HIV/AIDS reduction among the mobile populations especially young women who are the trafficking victims and increase the access of HIV prevention commodities among the irregular migrant workers both registered and unregistered is a necessity.

**Keywords:** Trafficking, Sexual exploitation, HIV/AIDS vulnerability